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Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 143176
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DRAFTED BY TEXT RECEIVED FROM WHITE HOUSE
APPROVED BY ACDA/D/D:SMKEENY
S/S-O:SGOLDSMITH
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY HELSINKI IMMEDIATE

T O P S E C R E T STATE 143176

NODIS
FOR US ASAT DELEGATION

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM

SUBJECT: INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ASAT DELEGATION

THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED FROM THE WHITE HOUSE.

BEGIN TEXT.

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE UPCOMING ASAT TALKS WITH THE SOVIETS IS TO EXPRESS OUR INTEREST IN REACHING A COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT TO LIMIT ASAT CAPABILITIES AND USE (EXCEPT FOR ELECTRONIC COUNTERMEASURES), TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITIES FOR SOME INITIAL STEPS IN THE ASAT AREA (DESCRIBED BELOW), AND TO GAUGE SOVIET INTERESTS AND REACTIONS.

AFTER MAKING CLEAR THAT THE US IS NOT MAKING FORMAL PROPOSALS, THE DELEGATION SHOULD STATE TO THE SOVIETS THAT WE ARE
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INTERESTED IN EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITIES FOR (1) DEALING WITH PHYSICAL ATTACKS ON SATELLITES POSSIBLY BY TREATING THEM AS HOSTILE ACTS, (2) PLEDGING NOT TO CONDUCT SUCH ATTACKS, (3) PLACING AN INDEFINITE MORATORIUM ON HIGH-ALTITUDE ASAT TESTS WITH A ONE-YEAR RIGHT OF WITHDRAWAL, AND (4) PLACING A SIX-MONTH MORATORIUM ON LOW-ALTITUDE TESTS WHILE WE EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES FOR AN AGREEMENT

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THAT WILL GUARANTEE NO SIGNIFICANT ASYMMETRIES IN OVERALL ASAT CAPABILITIES.

IF THE SOVIETS ARE INTERESTED IN COMING TO AN IMMEDIATE AGREEMENT ON ANY OF THESE IDEAS, THE DELEGATION SHOULD REPORT TO WASHINGTON FOR FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS.

IN DISCUSSING OUR INTEREST IN A COMPREHENSIVE PROPOSAL AND OUR UNWILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT A SIGNIFICANT ASYMMETRY IN ASAT CAPABILITY, THE DELEGATION MAY EXPLORE WITH THE SOVIETS THE POSSIBILITY OF FINDING A VERIFIABLE MEANS FOR EFFECTIVELY ELIMINATING THEIR CURRENT ORBITAL INTERCEPTOR CAPABILITY.

THE DELEGATION SHOULD MAKE CLEAR TO THE SOVIETS THAT WE INTEND TO SEEK AN ASAT CAPABILITY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNLESS THEY ARE WILLING TO TAKE POSITIVE ACTIONS TO PRECLUDE SUCH A MOVE ON OUR PART.

FINALLY, THE DELEGATION SHOULD MINIMIZE DISCUSSIONS OF THE SPACE SHUTTLE AND UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES ALLOW IT TO BE CHARACTERIZED AS AN ASAT SYSTEM.

END TEXT. VANCE

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